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Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you to today on an issue that deserves more attention, and I commend your subcommittee for identifying foreign language learning and capabilities as one of the ways the Intelligence Community can improve its performance. This is an enduring issue for intelligence, not just an issue that derives from the challenge of terrorism or the aftermath of September 11. Since the end of the Cold War, we have bemoaned, at different times, the insufficient capacity in the system of Chinese language skills, and in more obscure languages that are occasionally in acute demand because of a failing state or a humanitarian crisis. In hindsight, our capabilities in Russian language were robust during the cold war, but even then, there was a chronic concern that not enough analysts were truly proficient in that strategic language.

I am no longer in the intelligence community, and am not in a position to comment on any facts and figures you may have about current language skills in the community or numbers of new positions, or recruitment techniques, but it is an issue I cared a lot about when I was the Vice Chairman of the National Intelligence Council and was honored to represent the Director of Central Intelligence on board of the National Security Education Program, which is one of the tools we have to fix the language shortfall problem. I should also say that over 25 years ago, I was a beneficiary of past government efforts to train more Americans in foreign languages, and studied Arabic abroad and in graduate school on a National Defense Foreign Language Fellowship.

All of us who care about national security and about the contribution that intelligence makes to national security should share the commitment to language learning. It affects our security in the concrete, operational ways of supporting troops in combat and permitting our government to assess security conditions on the ground in unstable places. The requirements for language skills are many: to be able to surge in analytic coverage and in deployable forces during acute crises caused by natural or war-related disasters, to support diplomatic negotiations, to track over time the human rights abuses of a tyrannical government, and even to understand the long-term consequences of technological change and innovation in other societies through an ability to monitor professional journals and attend international conferences.

But for me, the language gap also affects a wider set of concerns: it is also about American culture and leadership, it is about adapting to challenges of globalization, and about improving our relations with the rest of the world. We need to think of the language shortfall not simply in operational terms – translating documents or collecting human intelligence - but in strategic terms. Is our society and our government really preparing for a time of greater global integration and the need to respond quickly to transnational threats and challenges?

Your committee may have addressed in other sessions the immediate plans to close gaps on the languages most in demand for conduct of the war on terrorism and the Iraq policy. Only current managers can provide up to date information. When I left government two years ago, it was an uneven picture. Most agencies were using stop-gap measures to fill the huge demand for immediate translation and interpretation of Arabic, Pashtu, Dari and other Central and South Asian languages. They were using contractors and short-term hires. The budget process and human resources policies in most agencies did not allow for any long-term commitment to translators as permanent government employees, and there was considerable anecdotal evidence that immigrants and native speakers who responded to public advertisements were not being hired in great numbers or with great speed. Nonetheless, some agencies were reporting that they were meeting their goals in terms of new hires in a given budget cycle; it was much harder to determine the quality of the work or the integration of new hires into the highest priority work facing the intelligence community, and whether enhanced language capability would make a difference to the intelligence product over time.

Let me go quickly to some ideas for improvements in the intelligence community's language capabilities. I hesitate to call these solutions because they are at best partial contributions to a very hard problem. They could improve performance by some degrees, but no one reform will solve the language gap or guarantee improved intelligence performance. I would like to focus on some internal issues, techniques or policies that could affect the value placed on language skills inside the intelligence system, based on my own experience and observation, particularly on the analytic side of the intelligence business. I will focus less on structural solutions, or the architecture of language policy,- because I understand others may address that perspective.

Here are a few ideas that relate to the culture inside the intelligence agencies.

1. **Lead by example.** The intelligence community needs leaders who have language skills, to demonstrate clearly that the road to success and promotion can be paved with foreign language learning. In the Cold War, at least two of the CIA's Deputy Directors of Intelligence (DDIs) were trained Sovietologists and had Russian language skills, but since then, officers with more general skills, some with a smattering of European language knowledge have advanced to the most senior positions. At least one former DDO was reportedly proficient in Chinese and Russian, which is very impressive, but the folklore around him suggests that he was a rare bird. Managers can tell young intelligence professionals that foreign language skills matter, but it is hard to really convince them unless they see language-capable leaders coming up through the system.

We also need to be honest: our big bureaucracies are uncomfortable with people who can connect with foreigners and exchange information or opinions when their fellow Americans in a meeting or on a delegation can't follow the conversation. I had the pleasure of working for former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who could conduct business in several European languages, but the "system" didn't always appreciate it because there was no record or transcript of her conversations with her counterparts in French, Russian, and Czech.

2. Integrate language-skilled officers, don't hide them in a corner. We need to be careful to not treat language as a technical skill, like the technician who comes in to fix the computer or adjust the lights. Language skilled officers need to be part of the full life cycle of intelligence, and need to have enough access to the policy-relevant work that they can take initiative and search for more appropriate material, not just wait to be tasked to translate a particular document or broadcast.

One of the agencies that rely most heavily on foreign language, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), has refined the ways of using different kinds of language skills, by mixing teams of native English speakers and native foreign language speakers, so that the right balance is struck between the American customer's needs and the meaning of the foreign broadcast or report. We need to recognize that cadres of only US-trained linguists will have significant shortcomings and limitations, and we have to be more creative and courageous in integrating native speakers into intelligence work. FBIS provides a useful model of smart ways to combine different kinds of language skills, for a better and more reliable product.

3. Technology is not the answer; it's at best a modest part of the solution. Machine translation is the solution for a very small percent of tasks, such as screening captured documents, or determining whether a computer is likely to have useful data. These are important tasks, but represent a small percentage of how language skills are needed and used in intelligence. More broadly, language is a fundamentally human requirement. It is more than translation, it's also insight into culture. In fact, language skills are a surrogate for regional knowledge. We can have higher confidence that an analyst with language has more insight into culture, because the time it takes to learn a language often requires residence in faraway places, often long sometimes tedious and lonely weeks wandering the streets, trying to make connections, learning to survive in a foreign economy. Such analysts are more likely to look at the other culture with appreciation of the human dimension, to see the textures and contradictions of another set of politics and cultural norms, and to better appreciate ways in which citizens of that other culture may think and respond to various American policies and initiatives.

4. Security is a big barrier. Intelligence agencies care a lot about security, and that is appropriate, but we need to recognize how priority given to security requirements can impede other goals, making it harder to achieve progress on critical needs such as more language capable officers. In my experience, despite a protocol that allows for adjudication among senior managers to see if vague, non-specific security concerns should be overridden to permit a hire, in reality, the security system holds a virtual veto

over hiring. Senior managers are reluctant to take the risk of pressing hard to challenge a ruling by the security bureaucrats. We need to consider whether this system is working properly to balance the equally valid goals of fairness to aspiring intelligence employees, security, and a more diversely skilled workforce.

Learning languages often means establishing friendships with native speakers, and maintaining the language requires continued contact and visits. Often the first question on security forms is about contact with foreign nationals. The system makes it seem that that's a dangerous and compromising thing to do. Many of us did manage to obtain clearances after providing information on our non-American friends, and on social and professional contacts with people who speak foreign languages, but we have all worried that such contact could create problems for us. Security also makes it hard for native speakers and recent immigrants to make it into the system. I have heard quite a few heartbreaking stories of extremely qualified candidates who were so eager to serve the United States being turned down and never told why. We need to balance the security concerns about a prospective candidate who may have relatives still living in the country of origin, with the potential benefits of access and understanding that such a candidate could provide. I realize this is a grey area, never easy to resolve, but I raise it because I think it has had an impact on the quantity and quality of language-capable officers in the workforce.

Let me end with a few thoughts about **National Security Education Program (NSEP),** which allows me to go back to my earlier theme – language learning is not just a technical skill, it's a cultural value, it's a state of mind, it's an attitude about America's role in the world.

I admire NSEP for a number of reasons: it is designed to nurture the importance of language and foreign experiences as widely as possible in our young population. It is not designed exclusively to develop professional language officers, although surely some of its alumni will become first-class translators. Rather, it approaches language in a more integrated way. Students can compete for NSEP fellowships who have never been overseas, or who have a clear professional goal – in science, or the humanities – for which foreign language learning is an enhancement but not essential for that profession, but for whom the chance to live in a foreign culture is transforming for that young life.

The program is structured in ways that make it smarter and more lasting in its impact that the federally funded program where I learned Arabic. NSEP integrates language into overall learning – most students are able to pursue some other academic or professional interest in the foreign language; they are learning language in the real world, and will be more well-rounded and have more to offer the national security professions that a pure emphasis on language learning as an end in itself. NSEP has convened alumni of the program and returning awardees to talk about their experiences, and I've had the pleasure of attending some of those gatherings. I recall a young man who wanted to be a veterinarian – he was studying Swahili while working in animal husbandry in Sudan. Another student was learning Spanish while working with an NGO to improve the quality of water in a rural area in a Central American country.

We need to think of NSEP as a strategic investment. It is not a vocational school to produce competent translators quickly. In fact, achieving real competence in a difficult foreign language takes far longer than the 6-12 months of an NSEP fellowship. But the opportunity to live and study overseas is profoundly important for young Americans, and, based on the alumni of the program to date, that experience shapes the career goals of most of them, and has inspired scores of the awardees to focus on federal service and on deepening their foreign language skills and regional knowledge as a life-long passion.

We should think of the goals of NSEP as not just better performance of government agencies, but also better image of US overseas and smarter engagement with other societies at all levels.

Some believe that the sun revolves around the English-speaking, American world. It's time to learn that our arrogance about the universality of the English language is misplaced. There are many cultural planets revolving around the sun, and Internet statistics show a rapid growth in non-English sites. Diverse cultures are using the web to communicate and transact business, and they don't all learn English to do so. We are also regrettably in a period of history when fewer foreign students, particularly from Muslim countries, are coming to the United States to study. The contact between ordinary Americans and people from the Muslim world is contracting, and that has consequences for access to language skills and for attitudes. NSEP is one modest way to keep some channels open, and to invest in a next generation of Americans who will be knowledgeable about critical parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman, I realize your subcommittee needs to weigh very concrete proposals and may be looking for specific solutions for intelligence shortfalls. In my experience, many of the ideas circulating – reserve officers, databanks of linguists and of translated documents – all make sense and are worth doing. But we need to see the issue in a wider context, as an enduring strategic challenge for our intelligence community and our society as a whole.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts on this critical issue.